

A 13
S E R M O N

PREACHED before the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
LORD MAYOR,
THE
COURT of ALDERMEN,

AND

Several LIVERY-COMPANIES of the
CITY of LONDON, at the Cathedral Church of
St. Paul, on Monday NOVEMBER 5, 1733.

By STRICKLAND GOUGH.

Published at the Request of the Court of Aldermen.

L O N D O N :

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*First Court held on Tuesday the 13th
Day of November, 1733, and in
the Seventh Year of the Reign of
KING GEORGE the Second of
Great-Britain, &c.*

BILLERS, Mayor.

IT is ordered that the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend Mr. *Gough* for his Sermon preached before this Court and the Liveries of the several Companies of this City, at the Cathedral Church of St. *Paul*, on *Monday* the fifth Instant, and that he be desired to print the same.

JACKSON.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir William Billers, Knt.

LORD MAYOR of the City of
LONDON.

My LORD,

I Take the liberty of addressing to your Lordship the following discourse, preached by your appointment; and now published at the particular request of the court of Aldermen.

YOUR Lordship's consistent notions of the Protestant religion, and our excellent establishment; your steady adherence to the liberties of the nation, connected with the just honour of government; your revolution-principles, and insuperable loyalty to the present royal family, entitle you to the esteem of all true Protestants and Englishmen. And I cannot but congratulate the city of London, on a magistrate so universally qualified to promote its real advantage.

BESIDES which, your Lordship's private character, renders you amiable to all who have the honour to know you, as you are free from those vices yourself, which you are obliged to punish in others; the contrary whereto will always expose the magistracy to contempt. And a frank, open disposition to serve your friends
unasked,

DEDICATION.

unasked, without expecting the submissions before, or servile acknowledgments after, which are painful to generous minds, and make so many persons of merit chuse to go without a favour, rather than solicit for it by so unworthy methods, is a quality more conspicuous in no man living than in your Lordship. For my own part I have too many obligations to be able, either in inclination or decency, to suppress my acknowledgments of gratitude on this occasion.

THAT your Lordship may long continue to be, as you have always been, an honour to the city, the friend of the government, and the joy of your acquaintance, is the earnest prayer of,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's Most Obliged,

November 14,
1733.

And Most Obedient Servant,

STRICKLAND GOUGH.

MATT. vii. 20.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

NOTHING is of equal importance with a good understanding of religion. Nor any thing more common than to be impos'd upon by the different parties pretending to it, especially if we come to the study of it new, and free from prejudices of education, as every upright and impartial enquirer ought to do. For which reason it will be of very great service to consider the general rules whereby we may judge of both. The words of the text, tho' they do not give us a positive one, by which we may determine what is religion, or who are the true professors of it, they guard us against the delusions of the vitious and designing, by acquainting us what it is not, and who they are whose claims to it are bad.

IN the fifteenth verse of the chapter, our Saviour cautions his disciples against *false prophets, who, tho' they should come in sheep's cloathing, yet inwardly were but ravening wolves*; telling them to judge of their mission, not by their outward garb and appearance, but by their actions and behaviour; it being as impossible for men of honest and upright principles to act vitiously, as for a good tree to bring forth evil fruit. And therefore

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whatever plausible pretensions they might make to be his disciples or successors, they were to be shun'd as hypocrites, and enemies to his religion.

AND that we might never be at a loss for this judgment, he frequently compares his own doctrine to *good seed*, design'd *to bring forth the fruits* of genuine piety towards God, and every social virtue for the benefit of mankind: exhorting his hearers not to content themselves with indifferent fruit, or with a small produce of good; but to *bring forth sixty and an hundred fold*.

BUT notwithstanding this, which is the principal design of christianity, and should be our chief instruction from it, how many of its professors pride themselves in a fine appearance, of no real use; at best but showy to the eye, perhaps pernicious and hurtful? Tho' the author of their religion expects them *to bring forth grapes*, they bring forth only *wild grapes*; which it would be impossible to impose upon mankind, if they were well-acquainted with his religion, and remembered he has taught us *to know them by their fruits*.

AND therefore the policy of the church of *Rome* is not sufficiently to be admired, who, conscious of her own barrenness, has excluded the people from any right of judging of her. To vitiate and deceive their imaginations, she is productive enough of fair and promising outsides, which may easily enough go down with the common people where they know no better. But that we may not be deceived thereby, let us judge of her only by the rule of the text. Which that we may do, I shall

I. *SHEW* the nature and design of religion, and the fruits it is proper to produce.

II. *THE* false pretensions of the church of *Rome*, by exposing their contrary nature and tendency. And,

III. *CONCLUDE* with some observations suited to the occasion of our present meeting.

I. *As* to the nature and design of religion, I have already said, the words of the text do not so properly tell us what it is, as what it is not. They do not assure us that every man who brings forth the external fruits of moral virtue is therefore a man of probity and uprightness of mind; for he may appear just, and charitable, and temperate, to deceive. A ravening wolf may creep into the flock of Christ in the cloathing, and, to all appearance, the innocency of a lamb. Very few deceits that have been in the world could have succeeded in their own proper dress; but they have been forced to borrow the attire of sanctity and religion. False prophets have the same show and appearance with the true; and are not to be discovered till they produce the proper fruits of their falshood. There is something more than the appearance of piety necessary to denominate even a private man good and religious; much more a prophet and teacher of religion. How then shall we be able to judge? If we receive such a one, we give credit to an impostor; if we reject a true prophet, we are infidels and *deny the faith.*

To determine this, it is necessary to consider what religion must be, before we give ear to any man under the character of a prophet: which we may know in general, tho' his instructions may be of very great use in particulars. Religion therefore must consist in the practice of virtue and devotion, that we may please God and be rewarded by him. In order to which it will be of the highest importance to know his nature and perfections. And in general, every one that thinks, will be able to perceive that he must be great, and holy, and good. If he be great, he is to be feared and worshiped. But how that worship is to be performed, we may learn more perfectly from a prophet commissioned by him to instruct us. If he is holy, we may be sure the worship he requires is pure and delicate. And from his goodness we may learn to love and imitate him. These are truths we ought to be firmly establish'd in, before we take upon us to judge either of the mission of a prophet, or of the revelation he brings: and we may be very sure, if he teaches any thing contrary to these fundamental truths, whatever credentials he may pretend, 'tis impossible he can come from God.

WHICH is so plain and obvious, that both the *Jewish* and *Christian* lawgivers, exhort their disciples to be constantly on their guard, and deny their credit to them. *Moses* cautions the *Jews*, Deut. xiii. 1. that if a prophet should arise among them to seduce them to idolatry, and give them a sign or wonder, they should not hearken to his word, even tho' the sign or wonder should come to pass. And our Saviour forewarns his disciples, Matt. xxiv. 24. that there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew so great signs and wonders, that, if possible, they

they should deceive even them whom he had chosen to be his peculiar followers; but notwithstanding these, which they might, at first view, be apt to impute to the particular interposition of heaven, they should pay them no regard, but might find them out by the pernicious tendency of their doctrines.

So that it is not only a principle of nature, but of revelation too, that we have prior rules whereby to judge of revelation. Tho' they are rather negative than positive. We may be more certain what is not religion, than what is. It must teach us nothing in its doctrines absurd or contradictory, nor any thing in its precepts vitious and impure. But if we have a proper attestation of real miracles, we are not to reject a revelation on any other account. Which I mention because there are some who pretend to reject the *Jewish* or *Christian* revelation, because they think there are many things in them low and trifling, and not of sufficient importance for God Almighty to interpose in. But what importance things, that may appear low and trifling to us, may be of upon the whole, we are incompetent judges. The most insignificant ceremony of the *Jews* might be of great use to preserve them separate from the neighbouring idolaters. And the simple elements of bread and wine in the christian sacrament are, at least, as proper as any other ceremony, by which we may keep alive the memory of the greatest benefactor that ever appear'd in the world. As long as they are innocent, and have the authority of a divine prophet to enforce them, we are capable of no farther judgment about them.

BUT it is not the business of this discourse to show all the marks whereby we are to judge of a true revelation, so much as to guard us against being impos'd on by a false one. And therefore I proceed to show that *Christianity* has the internal characters of a revelation, without entering on the proof of the external ones: by which we may be able to judge of the different parties into which the professors of it are divided.

THE doctrines it advances appear worthy of God; and its precepts tend to make us both holy and happy. The account it gives us of his perfections approves itself to our reason. His unity, greatness, and providence are so evident that every one must assent to them, as soon as they are understood. And all his moral perfections, namely, his holiness, justice, and goodness render him amiable, support our faith in him, and give us the greatest pleasure and delight in the hopes of his favour. His displeasure against sin, and justice in the punishment of it, heighten our aversion to it, and deter us from the practice. And at the same time, the compassion it proclaims to the penitent is the strongest motive to our reformation and amendment. Nor are they the only advantages to be drawn from these perfections. *Christianity* teaches us likewise to *be perfect as he is perfect*; exhorts us to the same purity, excites us to the same compassion, and strongly influences us to every good work from his example. Making the very essence of religion to consist in such like practices; without entering into nice and subtle speculations, which have no tendency to demonstrate the goodness and beauty of virtue; and are like the fig-tree in the Gospel, barren because full only of leaves.

THE precepts it has given us are of the most useful and excellent kind ; such as teach us to moderate and govern our appetites and passions ; not exhorting us to divest ourselves of, but only to direct them to those objects for which they were originally design'd ; and never to indulge them to the prejudice of our health, or nobler improvements of our minds, or to the injury of any of our fellow creatures. But on the contrary, it teaches all the social virtues of patience, charity, and compassion ; of obedience to government, and reverence of the laws, and zeal for the liberties of our country. And not only does it inculcate these in our outward behaviour, but in the inward temper and disposition of our minds ; instilling in us the softest and tenderest affections of humanity, not confin'd to our own kin or country, but extended to all mankind. It teaches us a quiet and peaceable disposition, the most useful of any in a society ; nay so strongly inforces it, that the religion itself is call'd *the gospel of peace*, and its author *the prince* of it. It is represented as design'd to bring it on earth, and to spread a mutual good will. It discountenances all turbulent ambitious attempts against the tranquillity of mankind, and enjoins us to forgive the injuries done us, and *to love our enemies* and persecuters.

THESE are the excellent fruits of Christianity. And that we may not mistake the nature of it, imagining it to consist in useless speculations or idle ceremonies, it frequently extols the superiour value of moral virtue over positive rites and observances, representing the God and Father of mankind as requiring *mercy rather than sacrifice*. It always draws some practical inferences from
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the important doctrines it proposes to our faith. From the unity of God, it guards us against idolatry. From his providence, it teaches us patience and content, and dissuades from covetousness, and an immoderate love of the world. From his forbearance towards sinners, and readiness to receive the penitent, it teaches us a relenting, forgiving spirit. From the resurrection and future judgment, it exhorts to those virtuous dispositions that may prepare us for that intellectual happiness, to which all the righteous shall then be determin'd. In short, it would be endless to show the use and advantage for our practice, that might be learn'd from the doctrines of the Gospel. Even the faith it demands in them, is of a moral and practical nature, as the whole Epistle of St. *James* is design'd to show. Nay the very proofs it gives us of the truth of its doctrines are of the same kind. The miracles of its Author are all human, and friendly to the miseries and necessities of the poor, and are every one of a social sort; either doing some immediate act of kindness, or teaching faith in God, the foundation of all society; or else removing the occasions of disobedience to his laws.

FROM this brief view of the practical design of Christianity, answering to the rules before given whereby we may judge of religion, what advantages may we not derive for our conduct as well as comfort, in every thing that is useful, or *lovely, or praise-worthy, or of good report?* And that I may not be thought to have represented them in too strong a light, hear the declarations of Christianity themselves. 1 *John* iii. 8. *For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.* *Gal.* v. 22, 23. *But the fruit*

fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance. And our Saviour has given us this rule whereby to judge of those who profess his religion, *John xiii. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye love one another.* And that we may not flatter ourselves with expectations of the favour of God on any other pretences whatsoever, not even the most judicious profession itself, he tells us, *v. 21 of the chap. where the text is, not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

AND yet notwithstanding these express declarations of *Christianity*, there are some, who tho' they insolently pretend to be the truest professors of it, have so perverted its design, and substituted so many useless ceremonies in the room of this *justice, mercy, and fidelity*, that with all their boasting, they seem to have little or no title to it, if according to the rule of the text, we may know them by their fruits. And therefore I proceed,

II. To show the false pretensions of the church of *Rome*, by exposing their contrary nature and tendency to true religion.

AND here I must premise, that if she falls by this rule, she has no other to support herself by. Even tho' she could prove her immoral doctrines from the Scriptures themselves, as 'tis manifest from what has been said, she cannot; it would be of no manner of service to her, but only oblige us to reject them; since they cannot alter the nature of things, and would only thereby prove themselves to be absurd. If she should,

with ever so great pomp of learning, trace them up to antiquity, it would only fix the folly and wickedness upon her forefathers: or, if she flies to the authority of the church, it leaves them there. For tho' every church has a power of ordaining innocent rites and ceremonies, she cannot make vice to be virtue, or turn falsehood into truth. Nay tho' she had as many true miracles as she boasts of false ones, they alone could not prove her mission; since false prophets may *shew great signs and wonders*, but will not thereby *deceive the elect*. The pretensions of a revelation itself are to be judged of by the prior rules of morality; and every church that derives its authority from revelation, must conform to the precepts of it, having no right to undermine or explain it away. Nay it is not the exactest faith that will be the standard of the purity of any church, any more than of private persons; but the goodness and usefulness of her doctrines and practices. By these only then, let us try this pretended *mother of us all*.

THE ridiculous fopperies and extravagancies of her worship I shall pass over with the silence and contempt they deserve. To describe them perhaps might ill suite with the gravity due to this place, and the occasion of this solemn meeting. And as they are borrow'd only from heathen customs and superstitions, as has been very learnedly prov'd by an ingenious writer * of this age and country, they would be a sufficient fund of ridicule. But the notions she entertains of the supream God, her perversion of all the virtues *Christianity* encourages, and palliation of the vices it forbids, her bloody, cruel, antichristian tenets and consequent per-

* Dr. Middleton.

secutions will condemn her of themselves. And there is no need of adding raillery to the conquest.

WHAT notions of the supream God does she entertain and advance, when she makes his holiness depend on the caprice of an ignorant or impertinent priest? In whose power she teaches it is to alter the nature of things: that the favour or displeasure of the Almighty, and consequently virtue and vice, depend on his determinations: and ascribes to God, *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*, an effeminate softness towards his creatures, or an inexorable rigour, at his superiour controul. *God cannot thus pervert judgment, nor the Almighty pervert equity. What is mortal man, that he should be more just than his maker!* This is equally absurd with transubstantiation itself, and we may as easily conceive how one body may be juggled into another, as how a frail, sinful, designing man may *oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God*, or, *sit in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*. 'Tis almost impossible for the lower people among them to have any regular and just notions of him, when they are taught such absurdities as these. What true, genuin, spiritual devotion then are they capable of paying him? Their idolatrous worshiping of saints and the virgin is of a piece with this. For if the supream Being is so very fickle and capricious, it is their best way to set as many to teaze him as they can. But where then is the steady, inflexible justice? where the universal, diffusive compassion, of which reason and the scripture speak? They know nothing of either; and have no other rule whereby to judge of his attributes, but the instructions of their priests, who take effectual care

to efface the natural notions men have of him; for if they should judge by them, the gainful trade of absolutions and indulgences would be lost. Perfectly right therefore are they in destroying these natural notions, by which even revelation itself is to be judged of.

MOREOVER what sentiments not only of God, but of virtue too does this church entertain, in her indulgence to all manner of lewdness and sensuality at her carnivals, and certain other particular times? Many are the sins she teaches to be venial; and so strong the corruptions of nature, that men will give any thing to be indulged in them. But if they are sins, a license to commit them is not to be purchased: if they are not, there is no need of it. The difference between virtue and vice, is in its own nature eternal and immutable: but with her 'tis variable, consisting only in a man's fortune, since the rich may be absolved thereby, when for want of it the poor must *perish in their sins*. A tenderness and compassion to the infirmities of human nature is a principle of *Christianity*; which inculcates a charity that *covereth a multitude of sins*. But to indulge men in practices that must prove their ruin, as all vice in the end must, is not a genuin tenderness. 'Twould be a truer indulgence to break men of those vitious passions, and excite them to a more resolute and manly behaviour, to a bravery and fortitude of mind, which is better shown in subduing the passions, than *in taking a city*. This single instance, that it encourages such impurities of practice as *Christianity* forbids; and lays such temptations in the way of that purity it so mightily encourages, and to which alone it has annex'd the glorious reward that they who have it

it in their hearts, and practise it in their lives *shall see God*, were sufficient to destroy her claim of being the true Christian church; it being notorious, that *Christianity* is the purest, this the impurest religion that ever appeared in the world. And I wish to God I could stop here.

BUT besides her great ignorance of the nature and attributes of God, and encouragement of sensuality and lewdness, how cruel and barbarous is she likewise? as if infatuated to be in every particular directly anti-christian, contrary to the religion whose design was to teach men *to live soberly, righteously, and godly*. To enumerate all her bloody tenets, and consequent persecutions were impossible. The attempt of this day will be sufficient to show us *what spirit she is of*. A design not engaged in by men under the influence of revenge, or any other turbulent passion, but coolly from a spirit of religion, and zeal for the church. A design contrary to all the principles of humanity, which but to think or speak of raises our compassion! What then shall we think of a church that can inspire with such cursed diabolical principles, that can erase the original sentiments of our nature, and transform us into creatures so very opposite to what God made us? How is it possible for any good-natured man to be of that religion? What perverseness to imagine her the only church of Christ, the most tender-hearted compassionate person that ever lived upon the earth; whose religion breaths nothing but goodness, gentleness, peace, and moderation, and has banish'd out of it, cruelty, animosity and hatred, with every thing that looks unfriendly to mankind? How strange is it for those whose hearts would bleed

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to see a common malefactor receive the just punishment of his crimes, to harden their hearts and exult in the most torturing death of a heretick ! An effect which for the honour of our natures, one would not credit, if it were possible to shut our eyes against it.

AND yet this is not only *sometimes* the case, and among the rougher part of our kind, but 'tis *universally* so, and prevails among the softer and tenderer half. 'Tis not the temper of a few hot-headed bigots, and the over-zealous of a party, but 'tis the universal maxim, constantly inculcated on them all. The honour of martyrdom is annex'd to it on earth, if they should suffer for it; and the best rewards promised it in heaven. Of which the lower part of the people are so firmly persuaded, that instead of feeling the natural remorse of such cruel attempts, they are only penitent when disappointed. As may be seen in the *histories* of this day, and the *trials* of some of the contrivers of it.

IF it were not the doctrine of the church, but only of a few private persons, it ought not to be laid to her charge, or mentioned to her disadvantage; or if it were barely the practice of some in contradiction to their principles; it would still be different, for truth does not alter its nature tho' in the mouths of bad men: but I believe there are few or none of the party that condemn it. That faith is not to be kept with hereticks is one of the fundamental doctrines of popery; and supporting the honour of the church, tho' by the vilest methods, is an obligation prior to all others. None of them ever dare deny these principles, but they are to be maintained at the expence of all other relations. They will, as our Saviour foretels so exactly as if it pointed directly
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at them, *set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother*, breaking the peace of families, destroying the obedience of subjects to their governours, and violating every sacred obligation; in direct opposition to the doctrine and precepts of *Christianity*, as we have seen. And yet this church pretends to be the true catholick church, nay, boasts to be the only christian one. But *by her fruits we shall know her* to have very little relation to Christ but in name.

HOWEVER to get clear of the charge, she pretends to the highest devotion; to the most rigid and severe precepts of mortification; and to be the most powerful advocate for charity and good works.

As to her devotion, it has been already shown how improbable it is for the lower people to have any true sense of it. They among them who appear to be of the church, only out of fashion, and to avoid the inconvenience of being reputed hereticks, may understand it better, and pay no inward regard to their ridiculous fopperies; but can the opinions already mentioned ever inspire men to *worship the Father in spirit, and in truth*? Ignorance, they acknowledge, is the mother of their devotion; and they need take very little pains to convince us that it is so. But true devotion consists in an inward reverence of God, founded on right apprehensions of his nature and perfections; not in external, unmeaning ceremonies; nor in an implicit faith in those who have the assurance to take his name upon them. It does not consist *in being of a sad countenance*, and confessing the sins they repeatedly practise; or a prostrate receiving the forgiveness of them from the hands of men who sell it, but whose forgiveness like their money *will perish with them*,
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and the poor deluded people find they have *spent it for that which is not bread.*

EQUALLY vain are her pretences to mortification. Instead of *Christian* mortification of their lusts and unruly passions, which on the contrary their indulgences encourage, it oftentimes consists only in luxurious entertainments of different kinds from their common diet, while at the same time that *they appear unto men to fast*, they practice those vices for which *their Father who seeth in secret shall reward them openly.* A change of diet is not fasting ; nor pampering their appetites mortification. Nor are the extremities of their mortification, at all agreeable to the *Christian* institution, which delights not in the unnecessary misery and torment of mankind, and requires no needless penances and severities ; only to controul their unruly passions, and *keep under*, not abuse *the body.*

THE strangest however of all her pretensions are those to charity and good works. But her charity not only begins, but ends at home too. To herself it must be acknowledged she is full kind, and all the charity she teaches is to the church : but as for those she calls heretics, who are all out of the bosom of the church, without the least compassion, she is for destroying both body and soul ; which she pretends is for the good of mankind, and a proper punishment of their infidelity. But is it for the good of mankind to persecute them for opinions, which perhaps 'tis not in their power to change, and who have an equal right to enjoy them with herself ? A method never to be defended, and in no case whatsoever justifiable ; it being as much the right of *Pagans* or *Protestants* to do the same as for her. Which if they were

were to do, how would it be possible for a man to come at the truth among them all? It must alter its nature in every place; and a traveller could never steadily adhere to it, but must put on the profession with the habit of every country he comes into. And it unfortunately happens for her, that here, as in all the other instances that have been mentioned, she is diametrically opposite to the gentle, compassionate, unpersecuting spirit of *Christianity*, and her *tender mercies are cruel*. So that in every light in which 'tis possible to consider her, *by her fruits* she is condemned. I proceed therefore,

III. To make such observations as are suitable to the occasion of our present meeting.

WHICH is to bless God for a deliverance of our nation from one of the most treacherous inhuman designs that even this blood-thirsty, antichristian church ever encouraged her professors in: the circumstances of which are sufficiently known, and need no aggravation or heightening. I shall only observe that among the other instances of infidelity this age is so remarkable for, there are many among us who give no credit to this history, thinking it to be only a piece of state-policy, and a forgery to render the *Roman Catholics* odious.---But whoever know any thing of their doctrines, and the history of other countries, wherein their persecutions and massacres on account of religion are so frequently related, need no such artifice to induce them to that hatred. Such a design was agreeable to their principles; the history of it has the same evidence with any other history; many of the accomplices suffered for it, and in their last moments gloried in it. Now, tho' men might easily be found to

contrive the other circumstances, yet, the last, of suffering on its account, if it had been only a contrivance, is very incredible. There seems to be no other reason to induce men to this unbelief, but an inclination to the religion that inspired the design.

ON the contrary, let us make that use of the day, to abhor such principles as could countenance them therein. And sure I need say no more to excite us to it, than how opposite, as has been already shewn, they are to the true genius of *Christianity*, how monstrously they trifle with God and virtue, perverting the original design of all religion, placing it in those things in which it cannot consist, and substituting ridiculous ceremonies, penances, and inhuman persecutions, in the room of true devotion, temperance, and universal charity.

LET us therefore think ourselves happy in a quite different constitution, under which religion has really and truly flourished, and which has produced as able defenders, and devout examples of it, as any establishment ever did. There is no duty to God, but may be paid him herein, nor any superstition encouraged to draw aside our hearts from true devotion. Our laws promote virtue and piety by all possible encouragements, and discountenance vice and atheism by every reasonable method. The worship established by them has the best tendency to make the people honour God, and love their neighbours. And to show how different it is from the haughty, insolent spirit of the church of *Rome* who confines *Christianity* to herself, it grants a universal toleration of all opinions, except those which naturally tend to destroy society, by dispensing with the faith due to it. A happiness not to be enjoyed in every

every *Christian* country! and is one of the greatest glories to our church; which if she be judged of *by her fruits* will appear to be truly *Christian* and *Catholick*.

AND therefore the wisest use we can make of the day, is to resolve, at the same time that we abhor *Po-pery*, to live in the union and charity of *Protestants*, without the least inclination, either in principle or practice, towards that church which we so solemnly protest against. Protesting against it is not sufficient to determine us *Protestants* if we bring forth any of the fruits of *Po-pery*; and we give her too much occasion to triumph, if we act like her. This however is our comfort, that she can never charge it upon the doctrines of our church; tho' we have had some warm, inconsistent people that have acted too much by her maxims, and been equally zealous for persecution, and confining *Christianity* to themselves. Men that were for taking the toleration away, or laying those to whom it is extended under greater difficulties and hardships. But this spirit, as it is disagreeable to *Christianity*, and absolutely inconsistent with *Protestantism*, 'tis to be hoped is pretty well banished from among us, and we grow more catholick. Let us bravely proceed in cultivating the generous disposition, as well from interest as principle. For then the church of *Rome* can expect no advantage of us, whereas if we are *divided against ourselves*, she may hope that in time we shall not be able to stand.

THERE is another very considerable motive to this union. We live in an age of great infidelity, when the principles of our common *Christianity* are furiously attacked. And if instead of uniting against the general

enemy, we fall out among ourselves about speculative opinions, or the outward garb and attire of religion, they may in the end get the better of us all. The bigotry and uncharitableness of *Christians* have put more plausible arguments into the mouths of unbelievers against them, and the efficacy of their religion, than any thing else could possibly have done. Men are too wise to be frightened into any principles by authority, and will judge of us only by our practice: but they may be allured into a love of our religion, when they observe us bring forth the fruits of moderation, forbearance, and kind affection.

AND as we should thus unite in religion, and for the common cause of *Christianity*, so let us do in civil life, by a steady adherence to the laws and liberties of our country, and an unalienable affection to our Prince. The love of our country, and obedience to government, are two fundamental precepts of religion. Without them 'twill be impossible to perform any other duty of society; or at best we shall do it but coldly, and be glad of any opportunities of excuse. But if they are ingrafted in our hearts, we shall think nothing too much to go thro' for their sake. Nor will a bare adherence to any principles be of much service, without a warm attachment to them. Many a good cause has been ruined by the indolence, and many a bad one succeeded by the life and zeal, of those who engaged in it; which 'tis very natural to expect; because the generality of people are unable to examine nicely into principles: but any man may see the beauty of an action; may know that beneficence and deeds of charity are excellent and laudable, and therefore they imagine

gine them to proceed from benevolence, and good dispositions of mind. And to be sure it is true in publick, tho' not in private life, that great and noble actions tho' from bad, are preferable to indifferent ones from the best of principles. Unless men see their own interest connected in some measure with that of the publick, it requires an uncommon turn of mind to adhere thereto. And therefore the way we are to show our love to our country is by an universal love to all the members of it, not confining it to any party. A principle which will connect the *relations* of the kingdom, without making the interest of one part inconsistent with that of another; so that a man must declare himself on one side only, in order to receive the benefits due to all.

AND therefore I cannot think it unseasonable for us on this day, when we are celebrating the deliverance of our nation from so villainous a conspiracy, seriously to consider the mischiefs of faction, how many populous countries have been ruined, and how many designing men made their private advantage by it. I hope no one has such views at this time; but parties seem to run very high, and in some places are carried to such extravagant lengths, that the regard due to the government is scarcely preserved, without which the good of the nation is not to be maintained: and 'tis an odd way to show our love to our country by taking methods for its destruction. As I hope none of this audience is conscious of any such design, I make the less scruple of taking notice of it; for tho' it may not immediately relate to you, yet an abhorrence of such practices, and an endeavour to discountenance them,

is the duty of every honest man, and true lover of his country's liberties.

THE honour and prerogative of the Prince is a fundamental part of the *English* constitution. And a man needs but little rhetorick to show how much his present Majesty deserves they should be supported, who has such a generous affection for his people, and is free from all those rough dispositions of mind that might urge him to attempt enslaving them. - This, all parties have so frequently and publickly acknowledged, that 'twould be an ill compliment to their sincerity, to spend any time in convincing them of it. Let us therefore steadfastly unite in our duty to him, and the more as we see any pursuing methods to his dishonour; that so we may give his enemies, and the enemies of our country and religion, no advantage against us. Our religion, like that of *Popery*, gives us no pretences against the person of our prince, by owning a superiour; nor dispenses with our obedience to him, unless, what is very far from being his Majesty's case, he should attempt the subversion of our liberties, or religion: which has always proved so fatal to those who have, that 'tis scarce to be supposed any will be again so infatuated. On the contrary his Majesty has always declared the steadiest adherence to the liberties and welfare of his subjects, and the highest pleasure when they are most effectually promoted; and therefore 'tis idle to be under such apprehensions. But tho' there is no danger of his endeavouring to make himself arbitrary, 'tis to be hoped we shall never see a prince without the spirit of a man.

AND as his Majesty is thus the true guardian of our liberties, so likewise is he of our religion, having never shewn the least disposition to alter it. He has none of the bigotry of some former princes who have encroached on the natural rights of conscience, nor the least disposition towards that wicked, persecuting church of *Rome*. A church which the wisdom of our laws has sufficiently guarded against, by excluding all who are of its communion from any right of dominion over us; the most effectual security of our liberties, which can never consist with that religion.

FOR which reason, on this day we ought never to forget the glorious revolution by King *William*, of the illustrious house of *Orange*, who rescued us from popery and arbitrary power, and established our liberties upon the present foundation, whereon they so securely stand. The memory of this prince should ever be dear to us, and we should pay a particular regard to his family. And I cannot but mention it to the honour of our nation, that they seem so generally pleased, that the present branch of it should reap the fruit of his ancestor's labours, by an alliance so honourable to himself, and of which he is universally allowed to be so deserving. It must be the highest encouragement to tread in the steps of our glorious deliverer, to be possess'd of the politest Princess in *Europe*, who has all the delicacy of her sex, the majesty of her rank, the superiour understanding, and other excellent accomplishments of her royal Mother.

WHAT advantages to the *Protestant* cause, may we not reasonably expect from such a pair! We may look forward with delight in the prospect, and the strongest hopes

hopes that his Majesty's wisdom in this match will lay the foundation of a long and lasting happiness to succeeding generations.

THAT none of the artifices of the church of *Rome* may blind the eyes of the people against the immoralities of her doctrines; but that *pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father* may encrease every day, and we may demonstrate the goodness of our *Christianity*, by bringing forth the fruits of it in our lives and conversations, may God Almighty of his infinite mercy grant, thro' Jesus Christ. To whom be all honour and glory ascribed, now and for ever. · *Amen.*

F I N I S.

